

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

- 1-2. Canceled.
3. (Currently Amended) The fastener as claimed in claim 25 2 wherein said first cross-member is in the form of a thin disk which is generally circular in lateral cross-section.
4. (Currently Amended) The fastener as claimed in claim 25 2 wherein the inner surface of said first cross-member has a surface area which is slightly greater than the surface area of the outer surface of said first cross-member.
5. (Currently Amended) The fastener as claimed in claim 25 2 wherein said first cross-member comprises a side surface which extends between the inner surface of said first cross-member and the outer surface of said first cross-member.
6. (Original) The fastener as claimed in claim 5 wherein the side surface of said first cross-member is rounded.
7. (Currently Amended) The fastener as claimed in claim 25 1 wherein said connector is in the form of a thin, straight filament.

8. (Currently Amended) The fastener as claimed in claim 25 + wherein the first end of said connector is formed onto the approximate center of the inner surface of said first cross-member.
9. (Currently Amended) The fastener as claimed in claim 25 + wherein said second cross-member comprises a flat inner surface and a flat outer surface.
10. (Original) The fastener as claimed in claim 9 wherein said second cross-member is in the form of a thin disk.
11. (Currently Amended) The fastener as claimed in claim 25 + wherein said fastener is constructed of plastic.
- 12-17. Canceled.
18. (Previously Presented) A combination of a fastener and a needle, said fastener comprising a connector having a first cross-member at a first end thereof and a second cross-member at a second end thereof, each of the first and second cross-members being in the form of a thin disk which includes an inner surface and an outer surface, the first end of said connector being formed onto the inner surface of the first cross-member and the second end of said connector being formed onto the inner surface of the second cross-member, said needle terminating in a tip at a front end thereof and being shaped to define a longitudinally-extending bore and a longitudinally-extending slot, said longitudinally-extending bore being dimensioned to receive one of said first

and second cross-members, said longitudinally-extending slot being dimensioned to permit said connector to extend therethrough while said one of said first and second cross-members is disposed within said longitudinally-extending bore.

19-21. Canceled.

22. (Original) The combination as claimed in claim 18 wherein said needle comprises:

- (a) a flat bottom wall,
- (b) a pair of flat, spaced apart sidewalls which extend orthogonally up from said flat bottom wall, and
- (c) a pair of flat flanges, one flange being formed onto and extending orthogonally inward from the free end of each of said pair of sidewalls.

23. (Original) The needle as claimed in claim 22 wherein the bore defined by said needle is generally rectangular in lateral cross-section.

24. (Previously Presented) A fastener for coupling together two or more items, said fastener comprising:

- (a) a connector having a first end and a second end,
- (b) a first cross-member formed onto the first end of said connector, said first cross-member being in the form of a thin disk, and

(c) a second cross-member formed onto the second end of said connector, said second cross-member being in the form of a thin disk.

25. (New) A fastener for coupling together two or more items, said fastener comprising:

(a) a connector having a first end and a second end,

(b) a first cross-member formed onto the first end of said connector, said first cross-member being in the form of a thin disk comprising a flat inner surface and a flat outer surface, the first end of said connector being formed onto the flat inner surface of said first cross-member, and

(c) a second cross-member formed onto the second end of said connector.